OUTLOOK *for the* BLIND

and THE TEACHERS FORUM

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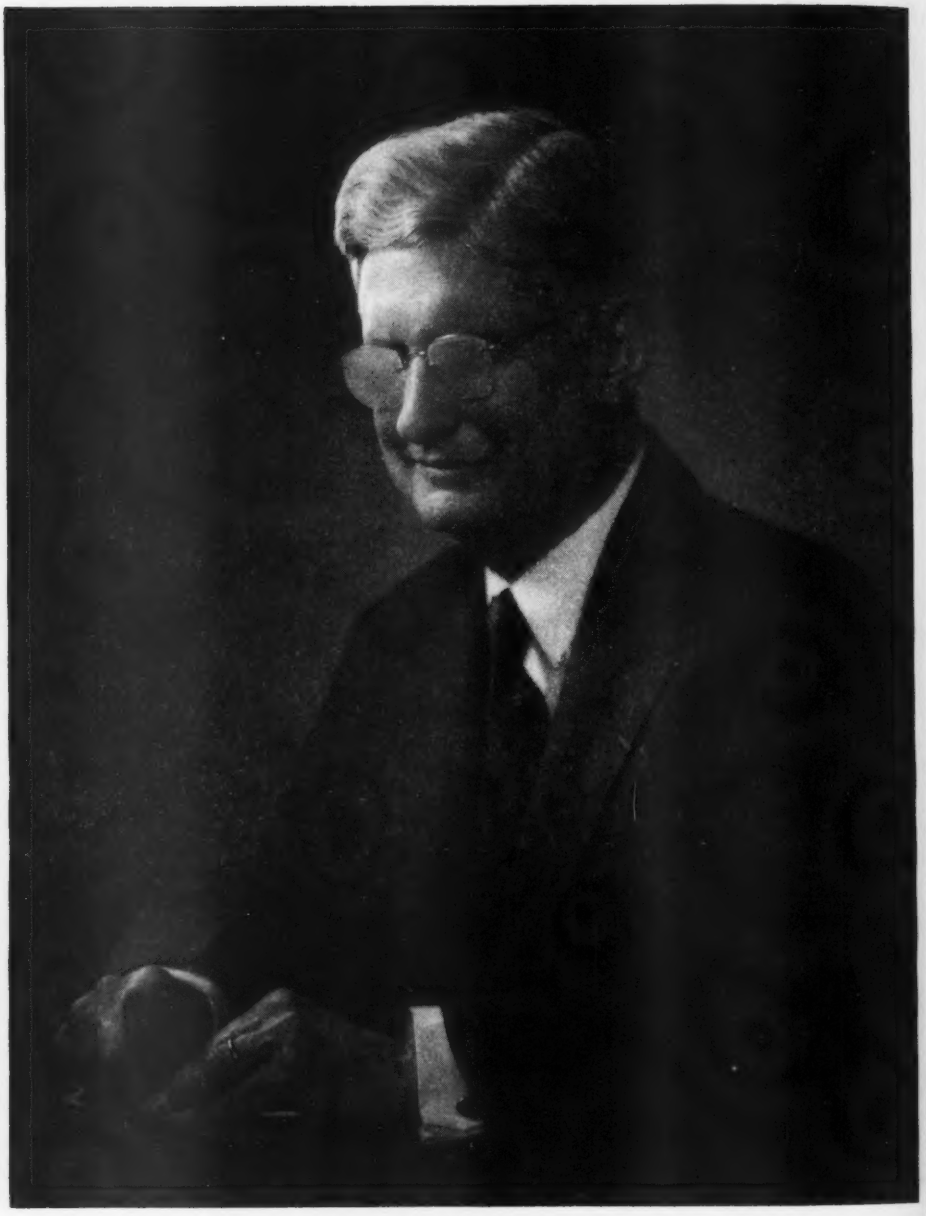

DR. ROBERT B. IRWIN

OUTLOOK *for the* BLIND

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AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND

FORTY YEARS OF LEADERSHIP

GEORGE F. MEYER

AFTER MORE than twenty-six years of service with the American Foundation for the Blind, Dr. Irwin is retiring as its executive director. Dr. Irwin is not a man whose retirement from this position will write "finis" to an outstanding career. However, it seems appropriate at this point that we should measure the contribution which forty years of leadership have made to the enrichment of the lives of blind people.

Dr. Irwin's preparation for his life's work was most unusual. Born of sturdy middle-class parents—pioneers in a new land—nature equipped him with a keen and resourceful mind, a refined and congenial temperament and a fertile imagination.

As a child—the eldest of twelve—he had the benefit of a wholesome family life which bred independence. In his youth, as a pupil at the Washington State School which he delights in referring to by its then official title, the "Washington State School for Defective Youth", he learned the meaning not only of institutional life but of intimate contact with others handicapped by blindness, deafness and even mental deficiency.

As a student at the University of Washington he tasted of the sacrifices involved in working one's way through school. As a graduate at Harvard he grasped the significance and need for a national point of view in work for the blind based upon personal contact with and intimate knowledge of local agencies working with blind people. It was on two of these nationwide tours of work for the blind that it was my privilege to first make the acquaintance of Dr. Irwin and it is significant that he stands out among the few that have developed a national point of view through such intimate and nationwide contacts. As the organizer and supervisor of day school classes for the blind in Cleveland in 1909, with later contacts throughout Ohio, he did much to set the pattern for day school class techniques, procedures and standards, throughout the country, acting as consultant and correspondent to pioneers in other communities.

George Meyer is executive director of the New Jersey State Commission for the Blind.

It was his fertile and resourceful mind that made him one of the first to see the advantage of serving the partially sighted child through the sight-saving class.

As sponsor of the Howe Publishing Society of Cleveland, organized as a means of utilizing private philanthropy to expand literature for the adult blind, he helped to lay the foundation for the more extensive federally financed library service for which the Foundation later sponsored Federal legislation.

His interest in the more general welfare of blind people stems from the nationwide survey of Blind Assistance which he conducted for the Red Cross in 1919 and revised in 1929, and which was to justify the Foundation's sponsorship of present public assistance legislation.

Indeed Dr. Irwin's interest in legislation and his competence in this field has enabled him as executive director of the Foundation to assume leadership in the enactment of most of the Federal legislation which has proven so helpful in meeting the needs of blind people.

Congressional action enabling interstate carriers to transport a blind person and guide for a single fare has meant untold comfort, convenience, and financial saving to thousands of traveling blind people for the past twenty years or more.

Passage of the Social Security Act providing financial assistance for the needy blind, the Randolph-Sheppard Act providing for the operation of vending stands in public buildings by blind people, legislation establishing and expanding the library service for the adult blind, the Wagner-O'Day Act providing for Federal purchase of articles made by the blind in workshops, the Barden-La Follette Act expanding opportunities for the rehabilitation of blind people—all of these became both the personal concern and the official responsibility of Dr. Irwin as director of the Foundation.

From the outset Dr. Irwin was in the midst of the movement to unite on a single system of braille for the English speaking world which was brought to fruition by an international committee on uniform type under his chairmanship. At the same time he interested himself in improving the facilities for braille printing, culminating in the almost universal adoption of two-side printing with its attendant economies.

The long period of research in the possibilities of the long-playing phonograph record as a medium for the transcription of books for the blind—Talking Books—which he sponsored as head of the Foundation is well-known. His personal efforts in laboring through private philanthropy, through Federal legislation, and finally, through the Works Progress Administration to bring about the production of a reasonably adequate supply of Talking Book machines to stimulate and keep pace with the growing production of Talking Books is, perhaps, not so well-known.

Such herculean tasks as are involved in these contributions must obviously be the work of many hands and minds but without his inspiration and leadership they must have been more haltingly accomplished and much longer delayed.

Nor could such interest and activity go without recognition—recognition which brought with it other responsibilities and more opportunities for greater service.

As president of the American Association of Workers for the Blind, as sponsor and organizer of the World Conference on Work for the Blind in 1931, as organizer and director of National Industries for the Blind to facilitate the purchase of blind-made articles by the Government, as chairman of the advisory committee on the war blind and ever willing consultant for that service, and as organizer and director of the American Foundation for Overseas Blind Dr. Irwin was afforded ever widening opportunities for service to the blind.

The honorary degree of doctor of laws bestowed by Western Reserve University, Cleveland, in 1943, the Alumnus Summa Laude Dignatus conferred by the University of Washington in 1945 and the cross of the Legion of Honor bestowed by the government of France in 1947 are evidences of the recognition which his work has elicited from the public at large.

It must be a source of great satisfaction to Dr. Irwin that in addition to the building of such an organization as the American Foundation for the Blind with all the services it renders he can look back on such a broad and varied roster of contributions to the welfare of blind people. It must be equally satisfying that in giving up the larger aspects of this national endeavor he is thereby enabled to concentrate his efforts upon even wider fields of helpfulness in world service for the blind embodied in the program of the American Foundation for Overseas Blind in which he is continuing. Knowing Dr. Irwin as we do we are confident that his personal interest will inspire such participation in our national programs as may insure the hard-earned gains that he has brought to the work.

M. ROBERT BARNETT APPOINTED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND

The Board of Trustees of the American Foundation for the Blind announces that Mr. M. Robert Barnett, former executive director of the Florida Council for the Blind will replace Dr. Robert B. Irwin as executive director of the Foundation, commencing his duties on or about September 15, 1949.

Mr. Barnett, who is 32, is a native of Jacksonville, Florida. He was blinded in an accident at the age of 15, at which time he was a senior at Robert E. Lee High School in Jacksonville. From January 1935 through March 1936 he attended the Florida School for the Blind at St. Augustine, to complete his high school training. He enrolled at Stetson University, Deland, Florida, in September 1936 and was graduated in June 1940, with a Bachelor of Arts degree. As an undergraduate he notably was vice-president of the student body, editor of the campus magazine and editor of the campus weekly newspaper. He graduated with "cum laude" rank for scholastic achievement.

From June 1940 to January 1943, Mr. Barnett was director of publicity and instructor in journalism at Stetson University. In January 1943, he became manager of the Deland Bureau for the *Daytona Beach News-Journal,* but continued to serve in a part-time capacity as a journalism instructor at Stetson. He also served as correspondent for the Associated Press, the *Orlando Sentinel,* and the *Florida Times-Union.*

Since the inception of the Florida Council for the Blind in 1941, Mr. Barnett had been in close association with the late executive director, Henry P. Johnson, and upon occasion served as publicity advisor for the Council. He was appointed placement officer with the Council in September 1944 and subsequently was promoted to the position of supervisor of the employment department. On October 1, 1945, after the death of Mr. Johnson, he was appointed executive director of the Florida Council for the Blind. In 1945 he was elected president of the National Council of Executives of State Agencies for the Blind. He is also a member of the Palma Ceia Lions Club and past vice-president of the Deland Lions Club.

Mr. Barnett is married and has two small children.

SIX YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS A PUBLIC SERVANT

JEAN H. CAMERON

A FEW NIGHTS AGO I heard a very charming speaker who started out by saying that the chief cause of her hesitancy in accepting an invitation to speak before a group was that she never could think of a good opening sentence. This is only a part of my trouble this afternoon, however. I feel particularly unqualified to address a group such as yours; first, because I am not a teacher, and secondly, because I hardly know what to say that would be really helpful to you in your field of home teaching. I shall, therefore, confine myself to a description of my job as I see it, and perhaps you will be kind enough to ask me the things you would like to know in case I fail to touch upon them as I go along.

Although I had established Civil Service eligibility prior to the war, I had never tried to secure employment with the government until about 1942. At that time I became very anxious for a job and appealed to Mrs. Kathryn C. Barkhausen, supervisor of services for the blind, Colorado State Department of Public Welfare, to help me. She brought me to Denver and secured permission for me to do volunteer typing in the offices of the Colorado State Department of Public Welfare. After she felt that I had acquired sufficient training to do a creditable job in an office, we began looking around for a possible placement for me. We heard of an opening in the headquarters of the Army Air Forces Western Technical Training Command, so we requested an interview with their civilian personnel officer. He stated that they were using the Sound-scriber equipment for the recording and transcribing of long distance telephone calls. They had tried out about twenty-one girls, of whom three were fair, two good, and one excellent, but the latter wouldn't stay on the job. It seemed that the chief trouble lay in keeping straight the voices of those participating in the telephone conversations. These were conference calls, there being as many as five or six participants on each end of the line at times. In transcribing the conversations, naturally, it was necessary to ascribe the proper words to the person having spoken them, and therein lay the downfall of most of the girls they had tried. He agreed that I should be given a trial, being hired only if my work proved satisfactory. On this basis I entered the signal office the following morning. I found the work quite fascinating. Keeping the voices of the various participants straight presented no particular problem to me because I had always had to do that from babyhood. As you are all no doubt aware, the world of a blind person is largely peopled by the voices he hears about him. In the headquarters the conversations dealt chiefly with airplanes, their crack-ups, rebuilding and the construction of mobile training units for the instruction of the boys handling airplanes in the various theaters of battle. Since I have a brother who spent a number of years in the Air Corps and whose chief in-

Editor's note:

The following paper, read at the Western Conference of Home Teachers of the Adult Blind, held at Denver, June 13-18, is rather personal but contains so many ideas which may prove helpful to other persons interested in stenographic work that it seems well worth publication in the *Outlook*.

Miss Jean H. Cameron, is a stenographer for the Bureau of Reclamation, United States Department of the Interior, Denver, Colorado.

terests are aeronautical and mechanical, the names of the various parts of an airplane held very little terror for me. Therefore, I was successful in the transcription of the telephone calls and was, accordingly, hired.

As soon as the officers in the headquarters realized that if they requested the transcription of a conversation they would get an accurate one and that right speedily, they decided to transcribe the telephone calls only upon request. Previously, they had found it necessary to transcribe everything so that if a request came in they would have the transcription available. This decision, while perfectly logical from their point of view, cut down the amount of my work to a considerable extent. While I am no more ambitious than the next fellow, if I must spend all day sitting in an office I would certainly prefer to be busy while I sit. Therefore, the sergeant in the office had the happy thought that I might as well learn to record the telephone calls as well as transcribe them. This I did and found it even more fascinating then the transcribing. It made the transcribing easier and quicker because it gave me a chance to hear the conversation while it was actually taking place, and I also discovered that the regulation of the volume had a very great effect on the resultant recording. When I came into the office there was another girl who worked on the telephone calls with me. However, her husband was sent by the Army to California and she soon followed him. This happened several times to various girls who were hired, and each time I had to break in and train the new girl. I finally decided that this was getting to be an old story and took more time than if I should do the work myself. I therefore asked the major in charge of the office if I might try to work out a system by which I could handle the work of recording, transcribing, filing, and logging the telephone calls. He was skeptical, but agreed that I might see what I could do toward that end. Once again I asked the help of Mrs. Barkhausen. She came down and helped me work out a system of putting brailled numbers on Scotch tape which would adhere quite readily to the plastic records used on the Sound-scriber machine. We found it more feasible to use two layers of Scotch tape for numbering the records because in this way the braille held up better on the tape. The records were filed ten to an envelope, and we found it quite possible to insert the envelope into a braille slate and write the first and last numbers of the ten numbered records to be filed in it—1 to 10, 11 to 20, etc. The log of daily calls presented another problem. When numbering the records, the numbers were cut with a knife for the use of the sighted workers; hence, the Scotch tape did not interfere with these numbers. In filing the envelopes, they were numbered in ink, so again the braille numerals did not interfere. But, when it came to maintaining a daily log, if I kept it in braille only, the sighted workers could not find a conversation if I were not there. If I maintained only a typewritten copy, I would always have to have the assistance of a sighted worker to find a requested conversation. The only solution appeared to be to make a braille copy for myself and to type a copy for the use of the rest of the force. This I did. The log sheet was a form sheet, of course, and I filled it in by the use of the tabulators. I did ask a sighted person to check once in awhile because I discovered that not all the forms were printed alike; that is, there might be more space in places on some than on others. I have since discovered that this is more often than not apt to be the case and that one cannot be too careful when filling in forms. My advice would be, don't do it if you can avoid it, but if it is absolutely necessary, then have a sighted person check your tabs before filling in the form. Thus, by the time I left the War Department in September, 1944, I was recording, transcribing, filing, and logging the daily incoming and outgoing long distance tele-

phone calls and having a wonderful time doing it. It was really a very interesting and fascinating job.

However, as is usually the case, there was a fly in the ointment. I had no security. The agency was a temporary one, and no one could guarantee me a job after the headquarters was deactivated. By that time I had quite made up my mind that, if at all possible, I wanted to stay in government service and I wanted a permanent classified Civil Service appointment. I therefore asked Mrs. Barkhausen if she would help me to secure a transfer. This time we approached the Bureau of Reclamation which is a permanent agency under the Department of the Interior. After due deliberation and interviewing, they finally agreed to hire me, but only if I could take dictation in shorthand as well as operate a dictaphone or ediphone. I had studied braille shorthand at one time but had never really used it. However, I agreed that I would take whatever they had to offer at the bureau, so I was hired as a stenographer. This time I enlisted the help of Mr. as well as Mrs. Barkhausen. They both used to dictate to me at night until I had mastered the system of braille shorthand sufficiently well to be able to take dictation at 80 words a minute. I found that the stenographic section of the bureau did not have a great deal of dictation to offer, and at that time what they did have was very routine personnel and purchasing letters. These I took gratefully, however, for it gave me practice in taking dictation, but what was even more important, it gave me practice in transcribing my own notes. I think any stenographer will bear me out when I say that transcription of notes always presents an added difficulty to the initiate.

Now, let me tell you a bit about the set-up of the stenographic section of the Bureau of Reclamation. It is, as its name implies, a group of girls whose job it is to take work from all over the bureau and turn it out in the best stenographic manner and in accordance with the best stenographic procedures. Whereas a secretary must become familiar with the terminology and the wishes and desires of only one man concerning his work, a girl in the stenographic section must do her best to turn out the work according to the wishes and desires of some 1800 engineers, clerks, and personnel people. This, let me assure you, is no small order. They have finally developed a *Stenographic Manual* by which we are governed and by which the men must be governed too. This undoubtedly has its advantages in that it makes for standardized performance and service, but it also has some disadvantages. Some people just plain don't want their work done according to the dictates of the Manual, and it then becomes necessary to exercise one's tact and diplomacy to the utmost. The pool consists of some ninety girls who are divided into ten groups, each of which is assigned to a division, the work of which the girls turn out. There is also a central pool where the work is taken from several divisions which are not large enough to warrant the setting up of full-time units of stenography. Each stenographic unit consists of from five to nine girls with a supervisor and an assistant supervisor. The work is all proofread before it leaves the section.

As for me, I am assigned to the research and geology division, partly because they make more use of dictating machines than any other division and partly because I much prefer their type of work. This is the division performing tests necessary to find out whether a certain aggregate will react properly with cement in the construction of a dam. It is also the division where the geological formations are studied to find out the depth to bedrock, whether that bedrock is sufficiently strong to permit the construction of an earth-fill dam, or whether a concrete dam can be constructed. It is also the division which analyzes the composition of the rock to decide whether it contains plagioclase,

orthoclase, hornblende, or what-have-you. You can see that it is necessary to become familiar with quite a large vocabulary of words not normally used in day-to-day living. When one realizes this and couples it with the fact that one must also do every letter and every report according to an almost minutely prescribed procedure, one has some conception of the idea that life can become very complicated and very much involved in a maze of small details.

However, I have done what I said I wanted to do. I have been hired by a permanent agency of the Federal Government, and I have secured a permanent, classified Civil Service appointment, my eligibility being obtained through competitive examinations. You might be interested in the test the Civil Service Commission worked out for blind applicants. It consists of a general aptitude test similar to that given to the sighted examinees. Of course, the examiner gives it orally and fills in the answers as dictated by the blind examinee. There is a typing test for accuracy and speed of typing, the copy for which is put on a dictaphone or ediphone record. If the applicant is asking for a stenographer's certification, she is given a test in dictation taken in shorthand. When I took this test it was being given at 96 words a minute, so, of course, I took it at that speed also. It is now given at 80 words a minute. I passed the test and, as I have said, was given a permanent Civil Service appointment.

This gives you some idea of the actual history of my employment as a stenographer by the Federal Government, but it doesn't give you the employment situation from a personal angle at all. I discussed with you before some of the little typing problems encountered and how I have attempted to solve them. I have since wondered whether I made my use of a guide sheet clear. The sheet used is about a half inch longer and a half inch wider than the paper actually being written on. The Scotch tape is placed about an inch from the bottom of the guide sheet and even with the right-hand edge of it. Since it is wider and longer than the paper being written on, one can readily see how the Scotch tape can be easily located with the finger of the right hand when one reaches the bottom of the page. Material is centered on the page by use of the tabulator which is set in the middle of the line, and then, of course, one back-spaces one space for each of two letters to be typed. When setting up tables from a record, I usually listen through it to discover the longest line of each column and then space it on the page accordingly. The typing of formulas presents no particular problem. One simply learns to free-roll a tiny bit in order to raise the letters above the line or to drop either letters or numbers, as the case may be, slightly below the line. As I stated before, I do not try to erase at all. There is too much variation in the quality of the paper and there are usually several copies which are all too easily smeared when erasing. The best solution I have found is to be as accurate as is humanly possible and when asking help of one's fellow workers, be as diplomatic as possible.

This brings me to what I consider a major point of this discussion. I do not think the need for diplomacy, understanding and tact when dealing with other employees can be over-emphasied. If we want people to accept us as normal human beings who are merely deprived of the use of our eyes, then we must make every effort to prove to them that we are just that. We must try to get away from feeling sorry for ourselves in any degree. We must take ourselves as for granted as may be if we want other people to take us for granted. If they want to go out for coffee with us, well and good; we would love to have their company. If not, that is all right too; we don't mind going alone, or perhaps not going at all.

In my case, I use a Seeing Eye dog as

a guide. It has worked out very well for me. I am able to go about the building and the area easily with the help of the dog and she often is helpful in making very interesting contacts, both between me and the engineers and between me and the other girls. I can assure you that she thinks of herself as a very important member of the Bureau of Reclamation. I think the other workers are quite ready to agree with her on that score, too. In fact, I sometimes wonder if I don't come along primarily for the ride, but since I haven't yet been able to teach her to type, perhaps there is still a justifiable reason for my coming to work, too.

THE HANDY FOUNDATION

The formation of a non-profit corporation to devote its efforts to rendering aid to blind and partially blind Negroes has been announced by W. C. Handy, Broadway music publisher and composer of the famed "St. Louis Blues."

The corporation is to be known as the W. C. Handy Foundation for the Blind, Inc., and John Randolph Smith, a former Atlanta business man, who has worked in the interest of blind individuals for the past eighteen years has been named its managing director.

The objectives of the Handy Foundation are to raise funds to aid blind and partially blind Negroes of the United States; to provide funds for research in the prevention of blindness; to promote Federal and state legislation for the welfare of blind and partially blind Negroes; to work for the development of, and the improvement of, established services for the blind; to seek better educational advantages and promote job opportunities for blind and partially blind Negroes of the United States.

Blind Negroes are urged to write for additional information to the Foundation at Theresa Hotel, Suite 1003, 2090 7th Avenue, New York 27, New York.

THE MIGEL MEDAL AWARD

On June 1, the Migel Medal of the American Foundation for the Blind was awarded for outstanding services to the blind, to Mr. Stetson K. Ryan, executive secretary of the Connecticut State Board of Education of the Blind.

In presenting the award, during an appropriate ceremony at the headquarters of the Foundation, Dr. Helen Keller declared that it was made in recognition of Mr. Ryan's long and successful work for blind people everywhere and particularly in Connecticut where he had built up the state service from small beginnings to one of the best and most respected agencies in the country.

A native of Connecticut, Mr. Ryan graduated from Wesleyan University and spent his first working years as a newspaper man, at one time being on the *Hartford Courant,* which he left to become assistant superintendent of the Hartford Charity Organization Society. For ten years, Mr. Ryan was secretary-general of the A. A. W. B. and for many years secretary of the Eastern Conference of Home Teachers of the Blind. He has been a member of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation since 1934 and a member of its Scholarship Committee since 1925.

The award, established eleven years ago by Mr. M. C. Migel, the Foundation's former president and now chairman of its board, has been given annually ever since. It was first presented to the late William Nelson Cromwell and among recent recipients are Peter J. Salmon, Lucy Goldthwaite, the late Henry Ford, John B. Curtis, and Francis B. Ierardi.

Readers of the *Outlook* will be interested to learn that Dr. Irwin was featured in "Look Applauds" in the July 5 issue of *Look*. "Look Applauds" is devoted to giving recognition to outstanding personages who have made distinguished contributions to knowledge, culture and the improvement of human relations.

IMAGINATION

SAMUEL P. HAYES, PH.D.

WE OFTEN HEAR someone say of an acquaintance, "He has no imagination. He has no idea how to improve his business or how to change his manner of living." Of another we say, "She is a very imaginative child. She lives constantly in fairyland. She tells impossible stories and seems to build up a wall around herself so that we never know what she is really thinking about. Many of her stories confuse fact and fancy, and with a perfectly straight face she tells of things which obviously cannot be true. And she believes them." There used to be a boy down our street who at the age of ten told wonderful stories of his exploits in the Cuban war, and with such solemnity and wealth of detail that the other boys used to take his stories home and repeat them, expressing great admiration for him.

Now what do we mean by imagination—this power of creating an interesting but unreal world? The psychologist would say that imagination is the use of images, that is, the picturing of objects and situations not present to the senses. A long series of experiments has been made, showing striking individual differences in the kind and vividness of imagery. Let me illustrate a simple type of experiment. Can you imagine what a five cent piece looks like? Can you picture a street car painted orange with a trolley pole above, and the windows half way down? Can you imagine how your bedroom looks as you enter it, whether the bed is to the left or the right, where the window is, where the bureau stands? If you can in your mind's eye picture these things we say that you have visual imagery, that is, you possess visual imagination. There has been a great deal of interesting discussion about visual imagery among the blind, and it is customary to say that if sight is lost within the first four or five years of a child's life, it is very doubtful whether such visual images persist. If one has used the eyes more than four or five years it is assumed that the part of the brain which is involved in the retention of images will be so well developed that it will continue to function all through life, or as long as one attempts to use it.

Ordinarily when one speaks of imagining one thinks only of visual imagery, but there are many other kinds. Let us try a few other experiments. Can you call to mind the sound of an automobile horn, the bark of a big dog, the sound of your own name when called by one of your friends? If you can call up these images we say that you have auditory or sound imagination. Can you recall the smell of coffee, the odor of freshly cut grass, of fresh paint? Can you imagine the taste of sugar or salt? Can you recall the feeling of smooth glass, of sandpaper, silk, or wool? Can you without moving your hands imagine what it would be like to shake hands with someone, to climb stairs or a ladder, to open a door, to comb your hair? Such images of touch and movement are very common, and often very important in remembering our actions, and they may be very misleading if the things we plan to do are different from the images. Those of you who play the piano are doubtless familiar with the phrase "getting a piece into our fingers", that is, practicing it so many

Dr. Samuel P. Hayes is head of the Department of Personnel and Research at Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind.

times that when you begin to play it you simply let your fingers go and *they* seem to do the rest. You are then guiding your performance by kinaesthetic or motor images. We may have still other images classed as "thermal" or "pain" images. You can easily recall the feeling of cold water on the face, or hot potatoes in your hand or in your mouth. You can imagine the prick of a pin, a burn, a bump or a scratch. Any kind of sensation that we can get from the world about us may return in our imagination as an image.

There are two quite distinct uses to which we may put these images—productive and reproductive imagination. In reproductive imagination we simply bring back in memory the things we have experienced before. Most of the illustrations I have given you are of that sort—calling back in memory or reproducing the sensations and experiences of the past. But we may also combine our images in new ways; we may put together our visual images into a picture that is different from anything we have actually seen. Through this productive use of the imagination all our creative work is done—making up a story, writing a poem, making an invention, devising a new game or test are all illustrations of the use of images in a new and different way from the form in which they first came to us, and this productive imagination is what we mean when we say a person is imaginative. This process begins very early in childhood. It is illustrated when a child of three crawls around on the floor and claims that it is a little bear or a dog. In some cases the child is so convinced of its make-believe that it may insist upon eating out of a dish on the floor in order to carry out the illusion. A great deal of the play of childhood depends upon this productive use of images. The doll becomes a real child, needing care and nourishment, the blocks are not simply pieces of wood, but trolley cars and locomotives. Many people think it much better to give children simple materials and let them construct their scenes and make their own toys than to give them complicated playthings which have been formed through the imagination of some adult. Some psychologists think our only hope of creative work in adult life is through an encouragement of this constructive or productive imagination in childhood.

Whether animals also have imagination is still a matter of discussion. Most psychologists say that even the higher animals do not show any indication of using productive imagination, and that under ordinary circumstances they probably do not sit down and reproduce memories from the past, reviewing their experiences as a young child does; but we do have evidence of what are called "anticipatory images" with some of the higher animals who have learned to do complicated things. Sometimes they seem to have rather a clear idea of the next step in their activity before they perform it. A raccoon, for instance, may be taught to get into a food box by moving six or seven different fastenings and ropes in a definite order. It seems reasonable to suppose that it could not learn them in the right order unless it had some idea, however vague, of the next thing to do after each thing it has done.

We make constant use of images in our everyday life. Most of the things that we recognize—our own hats and coats and shoes, our friends and the paths we take, we could not be sure of if they did not arouse some picture of the places and the times where we have seen them before. An illustration will make this plain. If I am asked to put my hand into a box in which there are a dozen different kinds of tools, and without looking at them attempt to tell which is a pair of scissors and which is a screw driver, I find that as I take hold of each one some sort of image comes up. If I have visual imagery, probably I will see mentally a pair of scissors or I may have a motor image of how it feels to open and close the scissors, or think of their weight or resistance. That is, I recognize a thing by having an image come into my

mind which shows its nature and use. All the simple things around us are associated with images from our past experience, and our recognition and perception of things is largely in terms of these images. Our standard measures are also images in daily use. What is your idea of an inch, or a yard, a quart, an hour, or a mile? I have associated an inch with the length of the joint of one of my fingers; a yard is about as wide as I can comfortably spread my arms; a quart is a picture of a bottle of a certain size; an hour is a rather vague memory of the number of things I can do in that period; a mile is imagined by considering how long it takes me to walk that far or how many trees and telephone poles I shall pass. Such images are constantly present when we are speaking or thinking. We combine them and rearrange them and from them we build up our universe.

There has been some interesting work done on the question of the culture of images. Years ago a psychologist found that people differed greatly in their ability to call up images, and in the enjoyment they obtained from them. Some noted scientists have reported that through neglect of poetry and ordinary literature, they find themselves unable to picture the scenes that writers describe, so they no longer enjoy what was once a great pleasure. It is perhaps true of some of you that the ease with which you can imagine scenes determines your enjoyment of descriptive writing. It is certainly true that we will not linger over descriptions if the descriptions are so poor that they cannot be made real, or if we lack the ability to picture them. Whether by daily exercise our power of imagination can be increased has also been an interesting problem, and some have thought that those with little tendency to imagine may greatly increase their powers by repeated trials. It has sometimes been said that country children have a great advantage over city children because country children have an opportunity to see a large variety of natural objects—the whole world of nature being at hand for their observation and use. Certainly the country child has the greater chance for collecting images, but it may be that it has less impulse to reconstruct its images into new combinations. It is often reported that an only child, who has not had daily companions to play with, is more likely than a child in a large family to create imaginary companions, so as to have somebody to play with. In other words, the creative imagination is stimulated by the wish for things which a child cannot have. It may be that the city child, who has less opportunity for observation, is impelled to create events and scenes because of his limited experiences.

Images have a very important part in our ethical development. They are not merely pictures but often have a dynamic or motive power. You know how easy it is to imitate the motions of others. If you see someone yawning, it is very difficult not to yawn. Coughing and whistling seem to occur spontaneously when others near us are coughing or whistling. Many images and ideas have this dynamic power; if we entertain them we seem to be practically compelled to express them. So it becomes very important for us to have the right images and ideas in our minds. Good models will lead to good behavior, while bad models may lead us astray. We should seek suitable companions from whom we may get desirable images of behavior, read good stories, and see good movies. Resolutions which involve images may be important guides in our conduct. Suppose that a girl has been greatly impressed with the idea of neatness. She has seen this person and that who are wonderful examples of neatness either in the way they dress or in the way they keep their possessions. Having acquired the idea of neatness she goes on to imagine herself as a very neat person. This idea may then show its dynamic force by leading her to practice what she pictures and imagines. Even day-dream-

ing of herself as a very neat person may lead her to act so that others notice it and commend her. Suppose a boy has become convinced by stories or examples that strict honesty is the best business policy, as well as the most comfortable state of mind. Having memories of stories in which honesty led to good results, he pictures himself always doing the right and honorable things. He may even have auditory images of people commending him for his honesty and uprightness. Whenever he is tempted to swerve from his resolution, the picture he has formed of himself will come into his mind and help him to live up to his ideals.

Images and pictures then are not simply interesting mental processes with which we may experiment and amuse ourselves. They are often important guides to action and in a crisis may control our decision for good or ill. It was with an appreciation of this fact that a wise man once said, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

A National Psychological Research Council for the Blind has been organized recently with the primary purpose of encouraging, initiating, and coordinating on a voluntary basis research to help the blind in effecting personal, social, and vocational adjustment. Michael J. Shortley, director of the Federal Security Agency's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, announced the formation of the committee. At the second meeting, held in Washington, D. C., on May 16-17, Dr. Samuel P. Hayes, director of research at Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind, Watertown, Massachusetts, was elected chairman. Dr. Wilma Donahue, director of the bureau of psychological services in the Institute for Human Adjustment of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, was chosen vice-chairman and chairman-elect. Dr. Salvatore G. DiMichael, psychological consultant of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Washington, D. C., was elected secretary.

The formal statement of functions adopted by the committee follows:

1. To encourage, initiate, and provide consultative assistance in planning research concerning problems inherent in blindness
2. To secure the cooperation of agencies and of institutions of higher learning in carrying out such research projects, and to encourage the establishment of research and demonstration centers
3. To serve as a clearing house for research projects and to aid in their allocation and financing
4. To review the studies made under this program
5. To intrepret and disseminate the findings so that the significant results will be available to the general public as well as those specifically concerned with the problem of blindness
6. To encourage the development, establishment, and use of uniform definitions and terminology in psychological research concerning the blind
7. To serve upon request in a consultative capacity to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and other public and private agencies and organizations concerned with the welfare of the blind

THE HARVARD COURSE

Dr. R. S. French, who retired last January as superintendent of the California School for the Blind, will be the guest lecturer this fall for the famous Harvard Course at Perkins Institution. This course was started in 1921 by Dr. Edward E. Allen and has been offered every year since that time. It was the first consistent effort in the United States to provide special training for teachers of the blind.

BRAILLE REASSESSED

Due for Elevation from Code to Script
Turning Point in Asia and Africa

SIR CLUTHA MACKENZIE

Part II

First of all, we are not aiming at the impossible; we are not advocating rushing into radical reforms or sweeping changes. For a very long time to come two factors preclude the ideal of braille being used as a world phonetic script in the full sense. The first is that the compass of sixty-three symbols, plus compound signs within reason, is not enough to cover the full range of sounds employed in human speech.

The second is that in the present stage of philology the education of the blind calls for braille, the uncontracted form at least, having a character to correspond to every visual character. But, though the ideal may remain unattainable for many decades, if not centuries, a sufficient degree of uniformity is already within our grasp to be of real material value. To attempt anything more than is immediately practicable would be to achieve nothing. Understandable opposition would be aroused.

A Moderate Policy Only

All that is suggested is that, when opportunities offer themselves, and they do now and then, braille development should hold to this principle. The present is clearly one of those opportunities. Blind welfare in Asia and Africa is approaching the end of the pioneer stage—the days of gallant if uncoordinated efforts, of struggling ill-financed schools, of conflicting early brailles, and of scanty collections of dirty, well-worn, hand transcribed books. National schemes, national braille presses and unified brailles are on their way. If mistakes are made at this milestone—mistakes which could only be overtaken after years of delay, rivalries and loss of money—it will be a heavy tragedy for five million blind.

Relationship to Standard English Should Not Create Misunderstanding

The fact that Standard English Braille values are considerably used in discussing this subject is commented on in some quarters. Professor J. R. Firth, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, says: "I do think our collaboration is essential. . . . finally, I do not, as I believe I have told you, believe that the approach should be dominated by English."

On the other hand, a leading Indian scholar, Professor Chatterji, M. A. (Calcutta), D. Litt. (London), F.R.A.S.P., head of the School of Comparative Philology, Calcutta, states: "Personally I would like our All-India Uniform Braille to have as many signs in common with the Standard or International Braille as possible—the sound values of International Braille should be adopted for Uni-

In Part I, Sir Clutha spoke of the complexities and delays in the education of the blind which have resulted from the *laissez-faire* manner in which braille was carried to distant lands. Speaking from his experience in a number of Asiatic countries, he stressed that the time had come for a concerted World Braille policy. In this concluding section he discusses some of the factors which have hitherto hindered braille's rational evolution. *Editor.*

form Indian Braille as far as practicable. I am a strong advocate for the general adoption of the Roman script (the latter being arranged according to the scientific scheme of the Indian alphabet as in the Devanagari) for all our Indian languages, in place of the current Indian systems of writing, and the same principle should in my opinion be adopted in framing a Uniform Indian Braille. I am exceedingly glad to find that you have adopted the Indian system in your chart."

The chart to which the professor refers is a Standard Indian Braille chart (or Standard International Braille) covering Devanagari, Kanarese, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Bengali, Gujrati, Gurmukhi, Oriya, Pushto, Sindhi, Urdu, Arabic and English, prepared by a committee of British and Indian blind.

In giving the views of the National Institute for the Blind, London, on this chart, Mr. W. McG. Eagar, C.B.E., its Secretary-General, says: "We were most anxious to consult all available expert information in this country, and only now are we in a position to pass on to you the results of our inquiries. . . . In view of the lack of any relation between the Roman and the various Indian alphabets, I am sure you are wise in divorcing your Standard Indian Braille from the seven-line system and in departing from the conventional sign order of the West. Considerations of inter-Indian sound relationship were, of course, an overriding factor, and the symmetry which you achieved by keeping close to them, must, for readers of Indian languages, surely be of a greater value than any which you might have attained had you established a relationship with Western practice, which in the circumstances could only have been a false one."

The truth is that in a matter of this kind we must build on an existing foundation. We must follow some standard. In this matter of braille we appear to have little discretion. The foundation was laid long ago—the standard set. Louis Braille's original allocation of particular braille symbols to particular Roman letters was and remains the foundation. His selection was accepted *in toto* by England and eventually by the whole of the English-speaking world; and his alphabet was also generally carried to the other European languages. As we have shown, British, American and German missionaries were the chief agents in taking braille to Asia and Africa, where their main method was to allot English (and French) braille characters where those characters adequately or nearly represented the sound of vernacular ones. We agree with Professor Firth when he says that "the approach should not be dominated by English." It is just that it seems that we appear to have no other course than to accept the yardstick history has already measured out for us. A further practical consideration is that in the areas concerned English is the most used European language.

It is the principle only which is stated here. Expert linguists as well as blind people qualified in the languages concerned will play a part in its application, and many factors must be considered.

A Common Result Whatever the Beginning

In discussing international braille, I find myself, as an English-speaker, apt to give the impression that I am chiefly concerned in establishing a relationship between all other languages and English. Of course, any impression that this policy is all in favour of English naturally arouses nationalist resentment. People's pride in their own language, its form, idioms and traditions, recoils at any thought that its characteristics might be submerged. Had this survey been made by an Arab, he might equally have unintentionally conveyed the impression that he wanted World Braille to come strongly under Arabic influence. It must be pointed out, however, that whether braille sprang originally from French, Arabic, Hindi or any other language,

the ultimate results of its logical coordination as a world script have been substantially the same.

To Braillise is Not to Romanise

All over the world the blind are using the same characters—not Roman, not Chinese, not Arabic, nor Devanagari, but braille and only braille. Sighted people appear to find it difficult to grasp this fact, a misconception which seems to give rise to an impression that to have braille consistency in sound or letter is to exert some Romanising influence on the expression of Oriental languages. This, of course, is not the case. Whether or not his braille is linked phonetically with World Braille, the blind student relates his braille characters to the sounds of his mother-alphabet.

The Roman alphabet has twenty-six characters, Devanagari fifty-four and braille sixty-three plus. When a language is Romanised for sighted people, an attempt is made to express all its sounds within the inadequate compass of twenty-six characters. On the other hand, when a script is braillised each character of that script is given a single braille character (not possible, of course, in ideographic scripts like Chinese). No difficulty arises, therefore, in providing a braille character, for example, for all fifty-four characters of Hindi (one of the chief Indian languages using the Devanagari script) and the blind Hindi child will, of course, give the same sound that the sighted child does to the corresponding visual character. His approach to International Braille must necessarily be, not through Roman, not through Western braille, but through his own mother-tongue and its braille script.

Symmetry in Braille Alphabets an Overrated Factor

That a symmetrical set-out is an essential part of braille alphabets is a view taken far more by sighted people than by the blind themselves. The former believe that braille is far more difficult to learn than is really the case; and in the kindness of their hearts either devise elaborate dot patterns or lay undue stress on the need to adhere to Louis Braille's original sequence which follows a kind of pattern. We, the blind, believe we get much better and far more lasting value out of braille if the braille signs in every language stand as nearly as possible for the same sounds. We recognize the value of symmetrical patterns as an aid in teaching new pupils, but there are so many ways of memorising braille that we find no need whatever to sacrifice phonetic association. Modern teachers make only slender use of strict alphabetical sequence. The practice in Britain, for example, is to group braille letters in ways that help the pupil's easy absorption. A, B, K and L form one such group; C, G and X another. The value of symmetrical aids is but short-lived; the ordinary blind student soon comes to associate each letter with a form. He analyses neither the number nor the angle of the dots which comprise it, but subconsciously recognises it as standing for this or that sound. From then onwards symmetrical association passes forever from his mind. As mentioned before, two all-Indian brailles have not met with acceptance by the blind because of this misconception.

Time to Abandon Laissez-faire

"Why not leave each country to settle its own braille?" is often asked. The old *laissez-faire* days resulted, of course, in all sorts of duplications, lack of consistency, bitter controversies and, worst of all, very, very grave delays in establishing adequate education for the blind and reservoirs of literature to be at their service, both for their cultural enjoyment and to help them in their occupations. Furthermore, and this is an important factor, linguistic areas do not coincide with political boundaries. They frequently overlap, and three or four languages may be in everyday

use in one political area. In a number of countries, too, technical knowledge of braille is lacking; sighted educational authorities naturally know little of it and may be at the mercy of the type of person, with whom many of us are familiar—who having learnt a braille form, designed by an amateur for a distant outpost, will defend it to the last ditch as the one and only braille he will tolerate. That we have reached a point at which international planning is essential cannot, I think, any longer be questioned.

Conclusion

In the expression of language in written form, we blind people are in advance of our seeing friends. It is true that they have planned an international language, Esperanto, but its script is Roman. When, however, we blind read Esperanto, we do so, not in the European script, Roman, but in an international script, braille. The world might some day work out a new international visual script; for this purpose it might choose the excellent Devanagari script of the Indo-Aryan languages, it might select modern Roman phonetics, or, maybe, some entirely new form—who knows? At any rate, visual scripts are not static and will almost certainly change to meet the convenience of our ever smaller, more closely integrated world. If we put this hitherto unconcerted evolution of braille into a positive policy, we achieve two purposes. Firstly, we remove one of the immediate difficulties facing the blind in learning and using second languages. Secondly, we place our braille in a position to anticipate and to accommodate itself to either gradual or sweeping changes in visual scripts, such as happened in Turkey when on government order Roman script replaced the old complex characters.

Let us aim at nothing extravagant, nothing unreasonable, nothing which entails the destruction of valuable libraries, but let us limit ourselves to practical realities, to the setting up of guiding principles to be put into effect only when, as in Asia and Africa today, change in the ordinary course of events is being made anyhow. Let us give braille its full status as a script and this process may be better understood and will follow much more easily.

THE PASSING OF MARY IRWIN

The blind of the United States and of Europe have suffered a heavy loss in the death of Mrs. Mary Irwin, wife of Dr. Robert B. Irwin, Executive Director of the American Foundation for Overseas Blind.

We have known for several months that Mrs. Irwin was gravely ill and followed the news of her health which we received occasionally from New York by way of Paris. Now her sojourn on earth is finished and she has certainly received the reward of a life dedicated to the blind for whom she worked with a constant wisdom and devotion.

Robert B. Irwin, in answering our letter of sympathy, has written: "I have decided to go on with my work for the betterment of the conditions of the blind all over the world." We who have often met Mrs. Irwin during the work of her husband in this great cause and who expect to see him again in Oxford and perhaps in Italy, realize all the heavy burden of his loss. To the blind of America we wish to send our sincere sympathy. Because of the collaboration which Robert B. Irwin and his deceased wife have organized across all frontiers, our loss is equally as deep as that of the Americans.

The above is a translation of an item which appeared in the May 5th issue of *Corriere dei Ciechi*, published in Rome.

At the annual dinner meeting of the Greater New York Council of Agencies for the Blind, held June 7, the following officers were elected for the coming year: Miss Marian Held, President; Howard Liechty, Vice-President; and Miss Elizabeth Meloney, Secretary-Treasurer.

THE USE OF THE CANE

B. A. LOUTFY AND O. J. BAKER

SINCE YOU NO LONGER are able to see, it seems as though there is nothing left but to sit down in the rocker beside the radio and let the days drift slowly by. You can get around in the house because it is familiar and you know where every step and obstacle is situated. But to go outside is another matter. It is difficult enough when someone leads you about, but to go out by yourself is utterly impossible. You do not know what your foot will fall into. You may stumble and hurt yourself and, besides, doesn't everybody tell you that you should not even make the attempt because you might get hurt?

This is absolutely untrue. Nothing can be farther from the truth. You are afraid to travel because you do not know what you can do with your cane. You do not know that your cane can, to a considerable degree, take the place of your sight. No, it is not a perfect substitute. But with it you can become independent in the sense that you can travel anywhere by yourself without the necessity of having some friend or relative lead you.

If the ability to properly use the cane is so valuable, how will you go about learning to use it? First, the ideal cane should be one with a crook, whose height from the ground would be about an inch or so below the belt.* You can measure it by holding the cane beside you and lining it up with your pelvis. The pelvis is the large bone that sticks out on the side just below your belt. If the cane is shorter, you will not be able to get a free, easy swing, and if it is longer, it is liable to be the cause of tripping others and will feel clumsy and not easily handled. The cane should be well-balanced and tapered from the crook to the ferrule so as to give it balance. However, the right length is more important than the weight. You can practice successfully if the cane is approximately the right length; otherwise you are likely to form wrong habits at the beginning which will be difficult to break later.

First we practice the proper swing of the cane. Stand with both feet firmly planted on the ground and with the body straight and the head held as though you were looking straight ahead. The body should be held erect but not stiff, relaxed but poised for movement if necessary. If you are right-handed you should begin practicing with that hand. Ultimately you should learn to use the cane equally well with either hand but that cannot be done successfully till you have learned to use the cane with the hand which is easier for you. Now hold the cane with the end of the crook down where the curve rounds off from the straight part of the cane. Hold the cane out in front of you at a 45 degree angle to the ground. Take a firm but not stiff grip on the crook. It is not something that is trying to get away from you or a snake that is going to curl up and bite you. With the elbow at the side, hold it or the upper inner side of the forearm against the body and swing so that the hand is in front of the center of the body. The elbow or upper inner side of the forearm acts as a fulcrum so that it is much easier to swing the cane from the proper posi-

*_Editor's note._ The proper length for a cane is still a matter of a great deal of debate among cane users. Many persons prefer a shorter cane than the one described here and others advocate a longer one.

B. A. Loutfy and O. J. Baker are instructors at the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men.

tion than if it were held out from the body and straight out. Now we have the cane held firmly by the crook in front of the center of the body pointing straight forward at an angle of about 45 degrees. You are now ready to learn to swing the cane rhythmically.

Holding the cane in the manner indicated, you then swing the cane from side to side. The swing should be about four to six inches to the left and right of the width of the shoulders. That is, four to six inches to the left of the left shoulder and four to six inches to the right of the right shoulder. The reason for this will be discussed later. The swing should be made by the motion of the wrist alone and not by the motion of the arm, which should remain stationary with relation to the rest of the body. This is very important. If the arm is used to create the swing, the movement of the cane will not be symmetrical. That is, it will swing farther to the right or the left depending on which hand you are using and you will not be able to go straight forward but will tend to veer off to the side, following the line halfway between the lines of points made by the cane as you progress. Remember the cane is swung rhythmically by the use of the wrist alone. Neither should the hand turn at the wrist, but the palm of the hand should be at right angles to the ground. Now you swing the cane rhythmically, counting if you wish for rhythm, so that the cane describes an arc whose ends are about four to six inches to the right of the right shoulder and four to six inches to the left of the left shoulder. As the cane is held at a 45 degree angle in front of you the arc of the circle will be at a 45 degree angle to the ground and of course the ends of the arc will be the points where the cane touches the ground. If you find that you have better control of the cane by placing the forefinger along the cane pointing downward, you may do so. That is, the forefinger may be placed along the body of the cane on top or along the side. This depends on the individual.

Now select a clear space or pavement with which you are well-acquainted, free from bumps or hollows if possible, and from three to six feet wide. A stretch of concrete pavement is ideal. Now find out which foot you habitually use first when you begin walking. Let us say that you are holding the cane in front of the body in the right hand, and that you are to step forward with the left foot. Swing the cane over to the right and step forward. Use this position as a basic one to begin the forward motion combined with the swinging of the cane. Now you continue by swinging the cane to the left at the same time bringing the right foot forward. The cane should touch the ground at the same time that the opposite foot does. The order is now left foot, cane right; right foot, cane left, and so on. You will have a tendency at first to swing the cane to the right side as the right foot goes forward and the same with the left. This is incorrect. The reason why the cane should be swung in the opposite direction to the foot is that by so doing you are placing the cane in the approximate place the foot will fall at the next step. Thus your cane is becoming in a sense a substitute eye. The feel of the cane as it touches the ground and the sound that you get as it touches the ground tell you what sort of territory your foot will fall on the next step. You can soon tell whether you are on brick, concrete, clay, grass or whatever you are traveling on, and it will also warn you of bumps and hollows ahead so that you can walk forward with confidence. If there are poles, trees or other obstacles in front of you, your cane will strike them and warn you of your approach to them and you can stop or go around them.

Now another reason for the wide swing of the cane becomes apparent. Let us say that you are passing a telephone pole that is a few inches to your right; if you have swung your cane in a sufficiently wide arc, you will be warned of it and will not strike it with your shoulder. Thus your cane by sound and feel

is giving you continuous information as to the nature of the ground on which you are walking and of obstacles that are in your way.

After you have mastered the cane technique you are ready to walk around the block. This is familiar territory. You have somewhat of an idea of the kind of pavement, trees, fences and other surroundings. You can use the wall or fence for a guide. Let us say that you are traveling with the wall on your right. You will stay about three feet to the left and if you are not sure of yourself you can reach over to your right with your cane and feel the wall to give you confidence. By the way, you will reach for that wall and not suddenly strike out at it. In case someone happens to be passing by, your cane will not then strike or trip them. Never swing your cane suddenly or strongly in any direction. Courtesy and good taste are always in order. After you gain more confidence it will not be necessary to reach for your guide but you will be able to walk along in a straight line. It is very important that you keep your head straight as though you were looking straight ahead. If you look down, your gait will not be natural but will tend to be choppy and if your head is turned to the side ever so slightly, your body will tend to follow in that direction and you will veer off to the side in which your head is pointing. So keep your head straight.

Suppose your cane suddenly touches an object in front of you; you can tell whether it is a tree, step, pole or whatever it is by feeling and tapping with your cane. If this fails, you can feel with your hand. However, you should avoid doing the latter as much as possible. The more you depend on your cane, the more useful it will become to you.

You have gone along one pavement to the street and your cane tells you that you have come to the curb. This you can determine by the fact that your cane has dipped down from four to six inches (the usual height) and you can feel the line of the curb with the cane. You wish to turn right so you step back two or three steps, turn right and continue to the next corner. This is repeated again until you return to your point of departure. Then you will reverse the process and go around the block in the opposite direction.

There is a very important point to remember here. If you run into a tree or step as you are traveling along, it will confuse you at first and there will probably be a moment of panic in which you will lose your direction. You then become disoriented and are not sure in which direction you are going till you have investigated and found a marker or guide again. When your cane tells you that you have come to an obstacle, above all do not change your direction. Do not turn ever so slightly to the right or the left, but investigate and step sidewise to the right or left as the situation may demand and continue in the same direction.

Let us suppose that you have now progressed to the point where you have sufficient confidence to cross the street. You go to the curb and feel for its curve. You can easily feel the curve by running your cane around the outside of the curb. Let us say that the curve of the curb extends from in front of you around to your right and that you wish to cross the street straight ahead. Then you have the street you wish to cross straight in front of you and the cross street to your right. You now feel for the notch in the curbing where the curved curb meets the straight one and you move over to your left so that your right foot is just a little to the left of that notch. Then you set the balls of your feet so that a line drawn from one toe tip to the other would be parallel to the curb line. You should now be facing directly toward the other side of the street. If you have taken the proper distance and have kept your head up and straight, you should go straight across the street. You now listen carefully for traffic sounds. If all is still or if the traffic on your right is moving, it is your "go" signal. You step off the curb and not too slowly or too

rapidly you cross the street. But you do not use your cane in crossing the street as you did when walking on the pavement. You hold it at a 45 degree angle straight out in front of you about two inches above the street. Why? Because you use your cane to tell you when you are approaching the opposite curb. If you hold it in the manner stated, it will tell you when you have arrived at the opposite side of the street and you will not find it with your foot and stumble. Now before stepping up on the curb, but after investigating its height, you move your cane to right and left to tell you whether there are any obstacles in your way. If not, you step up on the curb and continue on your way. In crossing streets, if there is any doubt as to where the opposite curb is, as in this case the other street is on your right, you will deliberately cross somewhat to the left as you will then eventually come to the wall and will not be going out into the street and traffic. If you hold your cane up at a 45 degree angle when crossing the street, it is serving no very useful purpose. You will stumble when you come to the curb at the other side and it will not be so much of a warning to motorists as has been claimed. The motorist has his eyes on the highway ahead of him and will see your cane as soon or sooner if it is pointed downward at a 45 degree angle.

With courage and persistence you can learn to walk with a cane and go anywhere you wish. This has been proved, not by words but by the deeds of many of the visually handicapped before you who have done it. However, if you are fortunate enough to have the opportunity of attending an orientation center, with the kindly help and understanding of the instructors in charge you can learn the technique much more quickly and with much less discouragement than if this opportunity were unavailable. Working with others who are going through the same experiences as you helps to create confidence, and your incorrect habits can be eliminated much more quickly. But remember this, with the cane you can travel alone and you can become more self-sufficient than you ever thought possible.

BOOK REVIEW

Rigidity and Isolation: A Study of the Deaf and the Blind. By Helton McAndrew. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology,* October 1948, pp. 476-494.

In applying the well-known psychological formula that behavior is a product of the interaction between the person and the environment, one may understand how it is possible for an individual who lives in a narrow, circumscribed environment to have fewer and more rigid social responses than one who leads a cosmopolitan life. In the former case, the person develops a small number of definite responses which meet his daily situations and which tend to become stereotyped. Such an individual is said to become "set in his ways" early in life and to possess social systems which are relatively undifferentiated. Dr. Kurt Lewin, the social psychologist, termed this concept "rigidity" and defined it in relatively broad terms. Dr. McAndrew interprets it as "the lack of variability and adaptability which results in a persistent repetition or continuation of an activity once begun, and

interferes with the making of appropriate adjustments to small changes in the situation".

It has been thought that deafness and blindness prevent an individual from fully interacting with his environment, serving as strong social barriers which few persons can penetrate or surmount. The lack of sight influences individual mobility to a marked degree, causing the person to limit himself largely to a narrow, familiar environment. This may result in undifferentiated social systems and stereotyped behavior responses.

Dr. McAndrew postulates the hypothesis that rigidity is a positive function of isolation. If such a relationship is established, it follows that the deaf are more isolated than the blind, who in turn are more isolated than the "normal." It is suggested, therefore, that the deaf are more rigid than the blind, and the blind are more rigid than the "normal." In the course of devising experiments to test this hypothesis, Dr. McAndrew established several corollaries: Other things being equal, if rigidity is a positive function of isolation, the more isolated an individual, the longer it will take to satiate one activity, the greater will be the difficulty he will have in making flexible adjustment to small changes in the situation, and the more difficulty he will have in restructuring a field.

The experimental population used in this study consisted of seventy-five individuals, ranging from ten to fifteen years of age and divided into three groups of twelve boys and thirteen girls each. One group was composed of blind subjects, the second of deaf individuals and the third of "normal" subjects. The youngsters were matched for intelligence.

The First Experiment: Satiation

"Satiation is the process by which the initially positive or neutral valence of an activity changes into a negative valence. It is supposed that the more rigid an individual, the longer it will require to transform positive or neutral valences into negative ones. The subjects were individually taught by the examiner to make balls, sticks and canes with ample supplies of clay. The teaching techniques varied with the type of handicap represented in each group. After the demonstration, each child was told: "This is all I have to show you. Would you like to make some balls? I have some work to do over here. You may do it if you like and stop any time you wish. It doesn't matter to me. I have some work to do."

It was found that the time required for satiation of the deaf was more than twice that required by the "normal" subjects, while the period of satiation for the blind was almost twice that of the "normals." The blind spent much less time in undifferentiated or free activity, preferring to engage in familiar repetitive tasks, fearing to venture into strange territory. It was observed that most of the blind subjects were either too helpless or insecure to attempt undifferentiated activity. An all-or-none quality was reported, with fear being suggested as a significant factor.

Experiment Two: Level of Aspiration

In this experiment the subjects were asked to estimate their performance on a Stoelting hand dynamometer, being given the following instructions: "The object is to guess as high as you think you can make. If you make the score you guessed, you get that score, but if you make more than you guessed, you get only the guessed score. Therefore, guess as high as you think you can make. If you don't get a score as high as the one you have guessed, you get zero, so don't guess more than you can make." Each individual was given twelve trials. After each trial he was told whether or not he had exceeded or equalled his guess. The pattern of such examiner responses was not based on the actual performance of the child, but was arbitrarily selected to test his reaction to success and failure. The deaf had the most difficulty in adjusting their level of aspiration as indi-

cated by their bids, to their apparent ability as indicated by the responses of the examiner to their performance. They tended to make all-or-none responses. The blind appeared similar to the "normals" in their reaction to success, but they were more sensitive to failure. On the whole, they tended to make small adjustments in their bids following an antecedent success or failure. The few large adjustments made by the blind group seemed in response to fear of failure.

Experiment Three: Restructuring by Classification

The subject was confronted by twenty-five objects—five each of squares, circles, triangles, rectangles and semicircles. Each of the five objects of any particular shape was constructed of a different material. Thus, one each of the triangles, for example, was composed of cork, cardboard, leather, plain glass and frosted glass. A preliminary trial was given each subject in which he was asked to classify ten objects according to both form and material. In the experiment proper, the subject was instructed to classify the twenty-five objects in five piles, sorting them in such a way that the objects in each pile were alike in some way. The children classified them according to shape or material. After the second trial, if the subject persisted in classifying the objects on the same basis as in his original trial, he was told, "Do it again." This was regarded as the first degree of social force. If the child persisted in his original basis of classification on the third trial, he was told, "Do it another way." This was considered to be the second degree of social force and was repeated where there was no change in method in the fifth and sixth trials as well. If persistence still continued, the examiner instructed the child, "No, do it another way. Put the things in five piles, five in each pile that are alike in a different way." These directions were given for trials 8, 9 and 10 as well, in the absence of change of method, and were regarded as the third degree of social force.

The normal group readily solved the problem, 96% of them requiring only one or two degrees of social force, and 100% completing the task with three degrees. However, only 17% of the deaf subjects in this sample were able to cope with this problem successfully, showing real difficulty in restructuring a field of twenty-five objects.

Experiment Four: The Rorschach Test

Owing to the visual nature of the Rorschach materials, this phase of the experiment was limited to the deaf and "normal" subjects only. In general, the protocols of the deaf children suggested rigidity and constriction in personality structure.

Conclusions

Dr. McAndrew offers the following conclusions: The satiation experiment indicates that the blind and deaf are more rigid than the normal, but there are such large individual variations in each group that the figures may not represent real group differences. The level of aspiration experiment suggests that the deaf are more rigid than the blind and the "normal." It is also suggested that the intelligence quotients of the handicapped groups, especially the deaf, may be influenced by the lack of flexibility of the person, and the educational quotient may be influenced by the barrier quality of deafness or blindness, which reduces the richness of the environment.

Dr. McAndrew suggests some criticisms and limitations of the experiments:

1. Comparison between deaf and blind groups is difficult, since the main arteries of communication for each are closed off to the other. As a result, touch activities were selected as the common ground. However, it seemed that the simple activities elected for the study were too juvenile to interest many of the subjects.

2. Clay modeling does not lend itself readily to satiation experiments because clay lacks permanence.

3. The elements of fatigue and crude grading may have influenced the results of the dynamometer-level of aspiration tests.

It is suggested that, despite these limitations, the study has revealed some interesting personality problems involving physical handicaps.

Methodologically, Dr. McAndrew's study is a stimulating one. In his matching of groups, however, he may have overlooked a characteristic of the deaf and blind children which may have significantly influenced his findings. It should be noted that the "normal" subjects were drawn from public schools, and consequently have had experiences in the home and the community which may make them noncomparable with the handicapped children, who were recruited from residential schools. Until we know the extent to which institutional life, *per se,* is a factor in limiting the environment and thus creating increased rigidity, it will be difficult to accept these findings as being purely the result of handicaps. It is possible that both institutional life and physical disability have roles in promoting rigidity, but the contribution of each of Dr. McAndrew's data must wait upon additional experimentation directed toward determining the relationship between institutionalization and rigidity.

This reviewer is inclined to welcome Dr. McAndrew's approach to the personality problems of handicap as a harbinger of significant events to come. This type of study, which has its core in real activity rather than intellectualized inventories and verbal tests, gives promise of exploring some of the fundamental psychological consequences of blindness. In this approach the individual is studied as a total organism, rather than as a sum of discrete traits. Perhaps we have devoted ourselves too extensively to the study of spatial perception, intelligence test results, academic achievement, and unitary characteristics to the neglect of the reaction of the whole child to the necessity of adjusting to the world of the seeing. If we can accept Dr. McAndrew's findings as being representative of the true situation wherein the blind are indeed more rigid than the seeing and that such rigidity is imposing additional social and academic handicaps upon them, then the time is indeed appropriate to take stock of the environment of the blind child.

During the past decade, Dr. Berthold Lowenfeld pragmatically reached conclusions which parallel those of Dr. McAndrew. Speaking from lecture platforms and through contributions to the literature, he has suggested that a primary objective of educators of the blind should not merely be oriented toward providing a "normal" environment for the blind child, but should be aimed at one infinitely richer and more varied to assist the individual to cope with the limiting effects of blindness. If rigidity is indeed a function of isolation, then we need to take measures to reduce isolation, through offering the blind youngster an environment that is replete with concrete experiences which have rich meaning for him, and which help him to understand the world of the seeing and to prepare for active participation in that world.

Herbert Rusalem.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Government of India
Ministry of Education
New Delhi, India
June 21, 1949

Sir:

I have read with interest the review of the pamphlet, "The Braille the Blind Want", which appeared in the April issue of your journal. Since it contains frequent references to Uniform Indian Braille which has been accepted as the standard braille code for this country, I should like to take this opportunity of tracing briefly the circumstances of its evolution. Perhaps it will also be relevant to define the attitude of the Government of India towards the movement for devising a unified Braille code for the world.

The adaptation of braille to Indian languages began in the last decades of the nineteenth century. In the following three or four decades, about half a dozen braille codes came into being as new schools for the blind were started in different parts of the country. Most of these codes were designed for local use and did not prove suitable for use on a national scale.

The first attempt at devising a Uniform Braille Code for Indian languages was made by two British educationists, Messrs. Knowles and Garthwaite. Their code entitled 'Oriental Braille' was published as early as 1902, but due to a variety of reasons, it did not gain country-wide recognition. Official initiative in this direction was taken for the first time in 1922, when, after hearing Mr. P. M. Advani, then Principal of the School for the Blind, Karachi, the Central Advisory Board of Education recommended the drawing up of a Uniform Braille Code for the major Indian languages. A year later followed an unofficial conference of teachers and workers for the blind in Bombay which discussed at length the problem of designing a single Braille code for Indian languages, but unfortunately, it adjourned without reaching a decision.

After a lull of nearly twelve years the question was again referred to the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1935, 1936 and 1938, but no decision was taken. In 1932, the National Institute for the Blind, London, had urged the Government of India to frame a common Braille code for Indian languages and to establish an up to date Braille Printing Press in the country. The work could not, however, be undertaken then owing to the financial stringency prevailing in the country.

In 1941, the Central Advisory Board of Education recommended that a committee should be appointed immediately to devise a Uniform Braille Code for the major Indian languages. Accordingly, a Committee of fourteen persons including three blind persons was appointed to deal with this intricate problem. Most of the members of the Committee were distinguished linguists and teachers and workers for the blind. The Committee carefully considered the various points of view put forward by the protagonists of different schools and laid down certain guiding principles for the drawing up of a Uniform Braille Code for Indian languages. The actual working out of the code was entrusted to an Expert Committee consisting of two linguists and two sighted braillists. One blind braillist was eventually taken on the Committee, but it should be remembered that the task of the Expert Committee was to work out a Uniform Braille Code strictly in accordance with

the recommendations of its parent Committee.

Uniform Braille Code as drawn up by the Expert Committee was circulated to all the Institutions for the Blind in the country for their opinion and the comments received by the Government of India were generally favourable. Uniform Indian Braille was therefore approved by the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1945.

While there was general support for Uniform Indian Braille, there were some experts who held a different view and drew up a code known as Standard Indian Braille based on the principle of same sign for same sound in Standard English Braille and Standard Indian Braille. Sir Clutha Mackenzie who was the most distinguished member of this group held in April 1946 discussions with the Expert Committee about the relative merits of Standard Indian Braille and Uniform Indian Braille. They could not come to an agreed decision and the matter was referred back to the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1947. The Board re-affirmed its approval of Uniform Indian Braille and the Government of India accepted it as the standard braille code for the country and recommended its use in all the institutions for the blind.

Recently, following discussion with persons and institutions interested in the welfare of the blind, we have requested UNESCO to explore the possibility of evolving a unified Braille code for the world and to consider whether Uniform Indian Braille could form the basis of such a code. We believe that if we can devise by agreement a code which satisfies the divergent needs of all the major language areas, it would be of very great advantage to the blind throughout the world. UNESCO has agreed to include a resolution on the subject in its programme for the General Conference in 1950. Meanwhile we have also suggested to UNESCO to invite a few experts to Paris to collect material for discussion at the General Conference next year.

Our aim should be to have a single Braille code for the whole world. If, however, this cannot be achieved just now on account of the wide differences in scripts used by the various language areas, we should at least reduce the number of Braille codes to two: one for countries using the Roman script and the other for Asia and Africa. We believe that Uniform Indian Braille which has tried to reconcile the claims of Sanskritic, Perso-Arabic and Dravidian alphabets may well supply the basis for the formulation of the latter code.

It is, however, essential that all interested in the welfare of the blind should adopt an objective and non-partisan attitude towards the complex problems of designing a Unified Braille code for the world. Alignment with rival schools of opinion sometimes leads to controversy and even acrimonious debates. We must lift the question of a Uniform World Braille out of the sphere of polemics and view the problem from a purely objective standpoint in order that the efforts of UNESCO may be crowned with success.

Yours faithfully,
HUMAYUN KABIR
Joint Secretary to the
Government of India

The annual convention of the National Society for Crippled Children and Adults will be held November 7, 8 and 9 at the Commodore Hotel, New York. Prominent authorities working in the field of the handicapped will present the latest developments at the three-day session marking twenty-eight years of service by the society. Delegates from 2,000 state and local affiliates of the National Society will discuss research, rehabilitation, training and treatment for the handicapped. Workers with the blind are invited to attend this convention.

NEWS AND VIEWS OF THE A.A.W.B.

Edited by ALFRED ALLEN, *Secretary-General*

The Twenty-third Convention of the American Association of Workers for the Blind met in Boston on July 18 through July 22 and was among the most successful conferences ever held.

More than 500 people were in daily attendance, including members and visitors from forty-four states, the Dominion of Canada and one visitor from India.

Highlight of the Convention was the banquet at which the Shotwell Memorial Award (a gold medal and scroll) was presented to Mr. Joseph F. Clunk, Chief, Services for the Blind, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Federal Security Agency, Washington, D. C., for distinguished service in work for the blind. Three hundred people were in attendance at the banquet.

Officers elected to serve until the 1951 convention include Francis B. Ierardi, Managing Editor, National Braille Press, Inc., Boston, Massachusetts, President; Roy Kumpe, Secretary-Manager, Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind, Inc., Little Rock, Arkansas, 1st Vice-President; A. V. Weir, General Manager, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Toronto, Canada, 2nd Vice-President; Lemont Hackett, Supervisor, Home Service Department, Maryland Workshop for the Blind, Baltimore, Maryland, Treasurer; Alfred Allen, Assistant Director, American Foundation for the Blind, New York, New York, Secretary-General. New board members elected were:

for Group A (Workshops) Miss M. Roberta Townsend, Director, Department for the Handicapped, Brooklyn Bureau of Social Service and Children's Aid Society, Brooklyn, New York (for four years)

for Group B (Rehabilitation Specialists) Mr. Fred W. Ave-Lallemant, Rehabilitation Counselor, District of Columbia Rehabilitation Service, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Federal Security Agency, Washington, D. C. (for four years)

for Group E (Executive Heads of state agencies) Aubra Hurt, Chief, Services for the Blind, State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (for two years, to fill the unexpired term of Roy Kumpe who was elected in 1947 to represent the group for four years)

It was voted to hold next year's conference in Salt Lake City, Utah and preliminary arrangements are now being negotiated.

On July 28th, the Secretary-General leaves for Oxford, England, to attend an International Conference on Work for the Blind and will return in late September. This will delay publication of the 1949 *Proceedings,* a copy of which will eventually be mailed to each member of the Association. Orders for additional copies (at $4.00 each) may be placed with the office of the Secretary-General, 15 West 16th Street, New York 11, New York.

According to the judgment of W. Somerset Maugham, the ten best novels of the world are *War and Peace* (Leo Tolstoy), *Old Man Goriot* (Honore de Balzac), *Tom Jones* (Henry Fielding), *Pride and Prejudice* (Jane Austen), *The Red and the Black* (Stendhal), *Wuthering Heights* (Emily Brontë), *Madame Bovary* (Gustave Flaubert), *David Copperfield* (Charles Dickens), *The Brothers Karamazov* (Fyddor Dostoevsky), and *Moby Dick* (Herman Melville).

WESTERN CONFERENCE OF HOME TEACHERS

The Western Conference of Home Teachers of the Adult Blind held its fourth annual convention jointly with rehabilitation personnel from Regions VII, VIII, IX and X, at Denver, Colorado on June 13-18. Miss Margaret M. Bland, home teacher, Colorado State Department of Public Welfare, and H. C. Corpening, regional representative, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Denver, were co-chairmen. Teachers from seven western states were present, and the American Foundation for the Blind made it possible for Miss Mary Curran, President, Eastern Conference of Home Teachers of the Adult Blind, and Miss Marie Busch, President, Midwestern Conference of Home Teachers of the Adult Blind to attend.

At the opening session greetings were extended by the Honorable Lee Knous, Governor of Colorado, and the Honorable Quigg Newton, mayor of Denver. Many interesting and educational papers were read during the course of the convention. Another very interesting feature was a panel composed of home teachers, a vocational rehabilitation worker and a social worker, which discussed cooperation between such workers in effecting rehabilitation of the blind.

Miss Bernice McCrary, supervisor of the field of handicrafts department, California Training Center for the Blind, Oakland, sent a display of handicraft equipment, and a craft class was conducted during the last day, instructing the home teachers in the making of the various articles.

Throughout the convention the Delta Gamma alumnae of Denver volunteered their time to serve the members as guides and chauffeurs and this service was greatly appreciated.

At the banquet Friday evening, Dr. Robert B. Irwin, executive director of the American Foundation for the Blind, presented Miss Blanche Lamb, home teacher, Utah Commission for the Blind, with a gift in recognition of her certification by the A. A. W. B. Guest speakers at the banquet were "Chuck" Collins, Denver radio entertainer, and Joseph F. Clunk, chief of services for the blind, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Washington, D. C.

Officers elected for the ensuing year are: president, Mrs. Juliet Bindt, home teacher, California State Library; vice-president, Murray B. Allen, executive secretary, Utah Commission for the Adult Blind; treasurer, Mrs. Tessie Jones, home teacher, Utah Commission for the Adult Blind; recording secretary, Malcolm Medler, home teacher, Oregon Commission for the Blind; corresponding secretary, Miss Uldine Gartin, instructor for the blind, Department of Public Assistance, Boise, Idaho.

APPOINTMENT

Mr. D. W. Overbeay has been appointed superintendent of the Iowa School for the Blind, succeeding Mr. Carl Gernetzky, who resigned in order to accept a position in the State Department.

Mr. Overbeay received his undergraduate training at Illinois College, in Jacksonville, was awarded an M.A. degree by the University of Illinois, and has done further graduate work at Columbia University. He taught for seven years at the Illinois School for the Blind, and has been principal of the Kansas School for the Blind for nine years.

He has been active in state teacher associations and in the American Association of Instructors of the Blind. During the past year he has been president of the Kansas City, Kansas, Lions Club.

It is indeed gratifying to have an experienced educator of the blind in charge of the excellent school in Vinton, and to see a good worker in our field advanced to this responsible position. His many friends wish him continued success and happiness.

COMPOSITION CONTEST WINNERS

The winners of the Fourth Annual National Composition Contest for Blind Composers were announced at the regular monthly meeting of The Braille Musical Club of Chicago, May 11. Due to the large number of entries and the high standard set by the previous contests, the judges—Irwin Fischer, Walter Flandorf and Max Sinzheimer, each an accomplished artist and composer—had a difficult time choosing the winners. Each of the compositions listed below was played on the piano by Velma Miles, a well-known Chicago musician, for the large audience of members and guests, who were enthusiastic in their praises of the beauty and quality of the numbers.

Part I. For Compositions in the Larger Forms

First Prize (the Richard Schmidt Memorial Prize), $100: "Quintet for Wind Instruments" by Carl Mathes, South Bend, Indiana

Second Price, $75: "Messages" (four voices, a capella) by John J. Duffy, Hartford, Connecticut

Third Prize, $50: "David, a Portrait" (for string orchestra, with violin and viola solos) by Robert Pruitt, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Fourth Prize, $25: "The Childhood of Jesus" (a song-cycle for voice, string quartet and flute) by Esther Davis Beadnell, Batavia, New York

Honorable Mention: "Toccata and Fugue" (for piano) by Carl Mathes

Part II. For Vocal Solos

First Prize, $50: "The Fiddler" by Carl Mathes

Second Prize, $35: "Faith" by Erik Frey, Chicago, Illinois

Third Prize, $20: "The Last Hour" by John J. Duffy

Fourth Prize, $12.50: "Our Garden Was Abloom" by Carl Mathes

Fifth Prize, $7.50: No winner

Part III. For Instrumental Solos

First Prize, $50: No winner

Second Prize, $35: "The Circus Clown" by Charles J. Beatz, Brooklyn, New York

Third Prize, $20: "Portrait of a Peasant" by Carl Mathes

Fourth Prize, $12.50: "V for Victory Suite" by John Marinuzzi, Long Island City, New York

Fifth Prize, $7.50: "Au Clair de la Lune" (for organ) by John J. Duffy

Please watch the leading braille magazines for the announcement of the Fifth Annual Composition Contest.

(Miss) Laura E. Anderson
Contest Chairman

TALKING BOOKS CATALOG

A new cumulative edition of the *Catalog of Talking Books for the Blind,* this one subtitled *1934-1948,* has been published by the Division for the Blind (of the Library of Congress). It runs to 188 pages and contains a total of 1,380 titles of works recorded for the blind from July 1934 to October 1, 1948.

This edition of the Library's periodic catalog of talking books is the first in which the titles are grouped by subjects, and listed in the order of the Dewey Decimal classification. A talking book catalog with subjects arranged in alphabetical order was published in 1945, and this was succeeded by supplements through 1946.

Annotations in the new edition indicate the subject matter of each book represented. Listings also include the imprint and give the date of recording and the names of readers. The catalog is solely for the use of blind readers and workers with the blind. Approximately 23,000 copies have been distributed.

Reprinted from the *Information Bulletin* of the Library of Congress.

THE SUGGESTION BOX

By the Technical Research Department

THE FUNCTION OF GADGETS. Now that this column has reached the end of its third year, perhaps the time has come for an over-all consideration of aims and opinions. There have been, from time to time, allusions to the use of the term "gadget," and on one occasion a reader sent in a very delightful poem in defense of the word.

The dictionary lists "device" as a synonym, but a lot of people feel that a better synonym would be "an essentially useless device," or even "a slightly silly device." If we accept either of these meanings, it will still have to be admitted that the individual point of view will determine what articles are gadgets and what really solve problems.

Many of the best cooks, for example, never use cookbooks. Long experience has taught them when a batter needs more milk or more flour. A recipe will call for so many eggs, but it is obvious that, for cake of a certain quality, that is a crude measurement, with eggs coming in so many different sizes. The best cooks adjust their other measurements to fit.

But no one starts out as a good cook. Even with the best cookbooks, beginners have their troubles. Many of the items carried by this department might be compared to recipes: they are invaluable for beginners and a hindrance to old-timers. Boon or nuisance depends on when and where.

For case workers particularly, it is important to remember that, for a newly blinded housewife, one of the first concerns is likely to be cooking. If she already has a gas stove, she begins to yearn for an electric range. She may fear matches. She may be afraid to even try lighting the burners. An early item in the catalog was the old-fashioned flint and steel gas stove lighter. And this has, time after time, overcome the hesitance of newly blinded people. Modern ranges, of course, have pilot lights, at least for the top burners; and, since the lighter won't work on ovens anyway, it certainly is a trifle for anyone with a modern range. In the case of old ranges, where it is almost impossible to keep the burners clean, the lighter is a tool which saves much handwashing and vastly speeds up cooking.

AGAINST GADGETS. The fewer special tools a man needs, the better off he is. It is always wiser to learn a technique to do a job than to buy a tool, unless the tool will pay for the space it takes up and its initial cost by a saving in time, perspiration or end results. That is why readers are urged to send in tips on how to do things and (since most of the suggestions cannot be published) to write in for tips on how to do any particular job.

ON MUSIC. For some reason (it may be the spring weather) there has lately been considerable agitation about music. This may also have been started by the notice of the Connie Anderson method for popular music notation. By a singular coincidence, however, a music teacher from California has submitted independently a course of music instruction which completely fits in with Mr. Anderson's system.

It has been pointed out by many blind people that the vast majority of performers who make a satisfactory living from their playing are in the popular field. It has been urged, therefore, that more emphasis be placed on the teaching of jazz and on publishing promptly at least the more successful popular

tunes. Mr. Anderson's system would make this feasible, if enough people would learn to use it. The course which has been submitted proposes to teach, not only the use of the method, but the playing of popular music on the piano in fourteen lessons. Indeed, for those who will work hard enough, the course is said to teach playing "by ear" in the fourteen steps. A second course would enable the musician to begin making arrangements.

The Liessens Music Writer would then become a highly useful tool for a great many people who, perhaps, now do little with their music, and even for many who have never seriously thought about music. For with it the blind musician is freed from the need for a musical secretary. He can set down his own arrangements accurately and quickly. He can take a position on a really competitive level with other musicians in the popular field.

The people who have bought music writers so far have frequently been leaders of sighted orchestras. No doubt many others could take similar positions if they troubled to master the music writer. They needn't be leaders; any musician who can come up with good arrangements triples his worth to a band he works with.

No definite plans have yet been made to issue the fourteen-step music course in braille, although several blind people have taken it in California. If there is sufficient interest, however, a publisher can probably be found, and that in turn can lead to regular publication of popular music in the Anderson notation system.

Walter G. Holmes Fund. The proceeds of the Murrah Memorial Bond this month will be used to supply decks of the "Bicycle" bridge cards to applicants who are not in a position to purchase them. Since the fund provides for only twenty such gifts, it may be necessary to disappoint some applicants.

Discount Services. Many requests are received to secure appliances and tools at discount prices. The department is not properly set up to secure such discounts. In many cases the costs of shipping, etc., would all but eat up the discount. In addition, with many things, the danger of damage in shipping, or the difficulty of securing subsequent repairs, makes it seem unwise to attempt to handle them. In a few cases, it may be possible to refer people to wholesale houses which will entertain direct orders; but this applies only to a handful of major items which are expensive and yet can easily be shipped without special packing costs.

Improved Protractor. The original protractor which has long been in the catalog was not of sufficient size for anything approaching accuracy. It has now been replaced with a larger model, with a 3-inch radius, instead of the earlier 2-inch version. This doubles the spacing between the braille indications, so that interpolations will be accurate to within about a degree. The pointer may be locked in any position with a knurled nut. Single braille dots occur at each five degrees, double at each ten and triple at 45, 90, and 135 degrees. 50¢ postpaid.

Eight-Quart Pressure Cooker. With the canning season not too far off, a new flood of requests can be expected for larger pressure cookers. So far, it has not been possible to recommend any of the very large size because all depend on dial gauges which it has not been thought safe to attempt to modify. The Aluminum Goods Manufacturing Company, however, have brought out an 8-quart model similar to the Mirro-Matic Pressure Pan. This will hold four quart jars or seven pint jars. It has the same spout and weight as the Mirro-Matic 4-quart model, which it resembles in every way except size. . . . Postpaid—$14.75

Brailled Pinochle Cards. From time to time we have had requests for brailled pinochle cards. These are now available from this department. It is an all-plastic card (brand name, Livingston), brailled in the upper left and lower right corners. The cards are packed in a brown plastic box. . . . . Postpaid—$2.25